



# PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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## New standard of 90 ppm Lead in Paints will Eliminate Leaded Paint from Nepal Will Take Effect 20 June 2015

(Kathmandu) A new standard of **90 ppm Lead in Paints** to protect children's health by eliminating hazardous levels of lead in paint was promulgated through notification in **Nepal Gazette (Khand 64, Number 30, Part 5, Notice No.3 dated December 22, 2014)** by **Government of Nepal, Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (MOSTE)** as per the Rule 15 of Environment Protection Regulation 1997. It will ensure children of Nepal grow up to be healthy adults who can reach their full intellectual potential." The standard will take effect after 181 days (June 20, 2015), and will be implemented with the support of the all concerned ministries, departments and stakeholders.

The paint standard is the result, in part, of a 3 year campaign waged by Center for Public Health and Environmental Development (CEPHED) in coordination with the IPEN Asian Lead Paint Elimination Project, which is being implemented in seven different countries (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand) with a total European Union funding of EUR 1.4 million (approx. 200 million NPR).

"The danger of lead exposure in Nepal is real and children are the most severely affected. Lead has impacts on brain development leading to lower IQ, mental retardation and kidney damage. These effects have a negative impact on school performance and are non-reversible. In Nepal, CEPHED demonstrated that many companies still sell paint containing high levels of lead. The result is that schools, households, offices... are contaminated with dust with high lead levels.

Lead is easy to replace since less harmful chemicals exist. Some brands produced in Asia have already adopted other formulas with no impact on production costs. The EU welcomes the Government's decision as a measure to ensure safe level standards of lead paints in Nepal and looks forward to its implementation" said **EU Ambassador to Nepal, H.E Ms Rensje Teerink**.

"On behalf of the children of Nepal, we thank the Government of Nepal, the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers (OPMCM) and MOSTE for their efforts in enacting this most awaited mandatory standard for lead in paint in Nepal of international standard/scale. Nepalese children now will be protected from lead exposure in their homes and in schools where brightly colored, heavily leaded paints are commonly used." said Ram Charitra Sah, Executive Director and Environment Scientist, Center for Public Health and Environmental Development (CEPHED), Nepal. "We are happy to have our own national standard and call on government for its effective implementation."



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Center for Public Health and Environmental Development (CEPHED) is a partner organization of the Asia Lead Paint Elimination Project, a project of IPEN. IPEN is an international organization promoting safe chemical policies and practices that protect human health and the environment.

This project is funded by the European Union.

Delegation of the European Union to Nepal  
Uttar Dhoka Sadak, Lainchaur  
P.O. Box 6754  
Kathmandu  
Nepal

"The European Union is made up of 28 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development while maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders."

According to 2011 census data, 9.5 million Nepalese children (about 36 % of total population) are at their golden age of development. Recent studies by CEPHED demonstrated that most paint companies in Nepal, including some major brands, sell paint for household use that contains unsafe levels of lead that exceed recognized worldwide standards. In some cases, CEPHED found, schools also were contaminated with dust with high lead levels.

The new standard sets a mandatory limit of 90 parts per million (ppm) lead content for any paint imported, produced, sold or used in Nepal. The standard is consistent with other lead paint standards around the world. The newly formulated standard will only allow the maximum lead content up to 90 ppm in all kinds of paints imported or produced within the country along with the precautionary information about protective measures to prevent lead exposure on the paint can ensure the overall public health and environment protection, said Manish Thapa, Policy and Communication Officer of the Center.

Nepal is the 53<sup>rd</sup> country in the world to establish lead paint regulation and one of only a handful of low- and middle-income countries to set limits on lead in paint. Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint (GAELP) has set a goal of eliminating lead in paint in all countries by the year 2020.

Mr. Sah noted the high economic losses to the country from lead exposure siting a recent study (New York University, 2013) which found the estimated lifetime economic cost to Nepal of lead exposure equals 1.5 billion International dollars or 4% of the Nepal's GDP, an amount that is likely much higher than total revenue from lead related business as a whole in Nepal.

"We encourage everyone, and especially parents, guardian, public, private, community, Montessori schools, to only use paint with logo on the can of lead free or no added leaded paints available in the country. We also urge all government agencies to effectively implement the promulgated standards, regulate imports and production of paint in Nepal. Finally, we urge Paint Manufacturers Association (PMA) members to comply readily with the 90 ppm standard and Paint Dealers Association (PDA) and its members to only import, purchase and sell paints complying with the standard.

Painted surfaces deteriorate with time or when disturbed, and lead from the paint then contaminates household dust and soils surrounding the home. Children ingest lead from contaminated dusts and soils during normal hand to mouth behavior. Damage to children's intelligence and mental development occurs, even when there are no obvious or clinical signs of lead poisoning. The World Health Organization (WHO) has said that "There appears to be no threshold level below which lead causes no injury to the developing human brain."

Lastly wish you all very happy and healthy Christmas and New Year 2015 AD.

**For more information, please contact:**

Mr. Ram Charitra Sah, Executive Director, CEPHED,  
Tel/Fax 00977-1-5201786, Mob: 00977- 9803047621, Email: [cephed04@yahoo.com](mailto:cephed04@yahoo.com)  
Er. Manish Thapa, Policy and Advocacy Officer, CEPHED,

Tel/Fax: 00977-1-5201786, Mob: 00977- 9843141850, Email: [gambhir2046@gmail.com](mailto:gambhir2046@gmail.com)

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**IPEN Asian Lead Paint Elimination Project** is working to eliminate lead in paint worldwide and raise widespread awareness among business entrepreneurs and consumers about the adverse human health impacts of lead-based decorative paints, particularly on the health of children under six years old. Seven Asian countries are participating in the project: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

**IPEN** is an international network with 700 participating organizations working in 116 countries that promote safe chemical policies and practices aimed at protecting human health and environment.

**CEPHED** is organization around Nepal working since 10 years in the area of chemical management, current and obsolete pesticides, healthcare waste, Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), heavy metals like mercury, lead and cadmium to bring the experience from the ground to the concerned authorities' notice that leads to more meaningful and sustainable solutions for healthy living and environment safety.

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